



Board of County Commissioners

County of Hunterdon
71 Main Street, Building #1
PO Box 2900
Flemington, NJ 08822-2900

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: July 12, 2022

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Hunterdon Veteran Headstone Cleaning Events Popular With County Residents

Families, Churches And Veterans Sign-up To 'Adopt' Veteran Headstones

Hunterdon County's Veteran Headstone Cleaning program has visited six cemeteries throughout the county, including Flemington, Glen Gardner, Lambertville, Milford, Frenchtown and Clinton, so far, with more than 550 Veteran headstones cleaned by a team of dedicated volunteers, Commissioner Board member Susan J. Soloway reported at the July 5th Board meeting.

Soloway, the Board's Veterans co-liaison, said, "Last year Hunterdon County introduced the Veteran Headstone Cleaning program to residents, inviting non-profit founder Trae Zipperer, whose organization 'By Memorial Day' inspires communities to honor Veterans in their final resting places by caring for their headstones.

Mr. Zipperer explained that cleaning the headstones demonstrates respect and honor for those who have served the nation who are now in their final resting place."

According to the 'By Memorial Day' website, Mr. Zipperer envisioned a nation of restored Veteran headstones, just like Arlington National Cemetery, and he has been sharing that mission since Veteran's Day, November 11, 2019.

Soloway continued, "The events inspire patriotism in those who participate and sets a great example for young people to understand and honor those who have served.

Many children, some as young as two, have come to the events and participated. Families have come and adopted a Veteran's gravesite and will continue to care for that headstone in the coming years."



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According to the Flemington Historical Society there are more than 150 cemeteries in Hunterdon County, most of them have Veteran Headstones that need cleaning and perpetual care.

Commissioner Board Deputy Director Zachary T. Rich, also a Veteran's co-liaison for the Board, commented, "While the volunteers were at the Evergreen Cemetery in Clinton, there were several young children and a sixteen-year-old young man, who came of his own volition, cleaning headstones. It was impressive to see the next generation honoring the county's Veterans in their final resting place and that's the point of this program. Kudos to the parents who involve their kids and let's continue doing this great work."

"Hunterdon County is the first county in the nation to commit to cleaning all Veteran headstones in its county cemeteries. I wish to express the Board's appreciation to the Administrator's executive assistant, Ruthi Cass, and to our County VSO Rich Booth, for pulling this program together, and to all the volunteers who are helping to make it a success," Soloway concluded.

Supplies are provided by the county for each cleaning event, but it is recommended that participants bring their own kitchen or gardening gloves when cleaning the headstones.

Local food establishments have been kind enough to donate food and drinks to volunteers at each event. Most recently, the Panera in Flemington and Chick-fil-A, also in Flemington, donated lunch for all volunteers.

Volunteers can reach out to VSO Rich Booth with any questions, 908-806-4179, and anyone interested in signing up for future cleaning events can email Ruthi Cass: rcass@co.hunterdon.nj.us